

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks at the United States-Nordic Leaders Summit in Helsinki, Finland
July 13, 2023

President Sauli Niinistö of Finland. Mr. President, dear Joe, you're most welcome to this Nordic family meeting.

President Biden. Good to be back.

President Niinistö. You know all of us, and we know you. We have understood and heard you referring many times on discussions so—by you and President Obama, and saying that if the whole world would be like Nordics, we wouldn't have that many problems.

President Biden. That's almost exactly what he would say. "If we left the important decisions to the Nordics, we'd all be in good shape."

President Niinistö. Oh, it's even better. *[Laughter]* Let's—this afternoon we try to be the worthy of that, by your assistance.

I think we have on the table only one issue, that is guarantee the future: security-wise, environmental-wise, and technology-wise.

So why don't we get started, please.

President Biden. Well, friends, it's good to be here with all of you. It's good to be back in Finland and——

[At this point, President Biden adjusted his microphone.]

There you go. It's good to be back in Finland and with all of you. And Barack wasn't very far off.

And we just finished a historic NATO summit—and I think it was historic—where we welcomed Finland's accession to NATO and reached an agreement to move forward on Sweden's membership in NATO. And it was a reminder that the nations around the table are—not only share a common history, but we share common challenges and—I would add, presumptuously—common values.

And you know, the vision for the world that we all share—and I think it's a very similar vision—is one that's more free, more secure, and opportunities made available for all. Because we know that when other countries do well, particularly those countries who are struggling, we all do better. We all do better.

And we're working in lockstep on—to tackle climate crisis, which you've been leaders on for a long time, and—in order to literally preserve our planet. It's the only existential threat humanity faces, and we don't have a lot of time. But I'm confident if we continue to work together, we can deal with it.

And we're pioneering the next generation of technologies, and that's going to power everyone's economies. And I think we have to even—we have to continue to remain very close on coordinating. Because it can be a great, great advantage for humanity, but it could also cause some great difficulties in artificial intelligence and other things if we don't cooperate and know what is going on.

And together, we're standing with the brave people of Ukraine as they defend themselves against Russia's brutal assault.

So today I look forward to discussing these and many other issues. And generally, it's an honor to be with you all. It's an honor to be with you. Thank you.

Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdóttir of Iceland. Well, thank you, Sauli, for organizing this meeting. And thank you, Joe, for being with us, your Nordic friends, here today.

I think it's actually very meaningful for all of us just arriving from Vilnius, the NATO summit. And we can continue our discussions on security, but also talk about the other generational challenges we are all facing—the climate and the biodiversity crisis, if I may mention that.

President Biden. Yes.

Prime Minister Jakobsdóttir. And I must say that the U.S. obviously has a very important role to play there. And we definitely want to do our bit there.

Artificial intelligence—and I agree—it is really the responsibility of our societies to ensure that it will benefit all of us because it can also have a detrimental effect. And I would also like to mention societal resilience, which is a theme we often talk about here at our Nordic meetings, and I think we can actually, well, you know, learn a lot from each other when it comes to those issues.

So I value this opportunity very much and look forward to our discussions.

Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen of Denmark. Well, first of all, thank you for—for hosting us today, and good to see you in the Nordic part of the world, President Biden. I think was—our meeting in NATO in Vilnius was very successful. It's a stronger alliance now after we left the meeting than before.

And I think we have to salute you, because it was a brave decision, just after the war started, to gather with Sweden to walk in our direction in NATO. And now you have become a member, and we are so happy that we will soon be able to welcome Sweden as well.

And of course, this means something for the Nordic region, because we have been together in so many areas through the years, but we have never been together in NATO before. So this also brings us some possibilities and opportunities in the Nordic region.

You said before that we have been frontrunners on the green transition, but it's you who have brought U.S. back on the green agenda, fighting climate change.

And I think one of the areas where we can work even closer together, U.S. and the Nordic, are the idea of not only ensuring that we will combat climate change, but at the same time, we have to create jobs for ordinary people.

President Biden. Yes.

Prime Minister Frederiksen. So—and this is the Nordic way of doing things, that we always think holistic. So not just solving a crisis or solving a problem, but creating a better future for more people.

And with you as President in the White House, we have a possibility to do it together.

So thanks again for inviting us. It's fantastic to be here.

Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre of Norway. I will follow up on my colleagues and for you, President Biden, to be with the Nordics, as we said in Vilnius, this is the first time in modern times. Historians will discuss whether you have to go back to the 14th century to see us around the same table. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Frederiksen. [Inaudible]

Prime Minister Støre. Well—we've——

Prime Minister Frederiksen. And we decided that.

Prime Minister Støre. Yes. *[Laughter]* We were very young then.

But nonetheless, it is historic. And I don't think this is a time for looking back; it's really time to see what will this mean. I think it will be a stronger Nordic voice in NATO. It will make us more secure and NATO stronger, as a strong alliance.

And I'll pick up on what Mette is saying. I remember, President Biden, in the campaign, you said that "I'm a union man." And I think when we do work on the environment and the big energy transition, we really have to look after jobs and welfare. Because if this is going to be a detriment for jobs and welfare, we will not succeed.

And I take it that we are likeminded on this. And we have to be preparing for climate conferences this fall, for new moments coming. And I think this discussion here will also give us some inspiration for that.

In addition, when we will now start planning our security and national defense, we will do so for the first time with what we call interoperability in the northern region. And that is a significant improvement.

Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson of Sweden. First, Sauli, thanks very much for hosting us again in this beautiful place. The last time was together with President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much.

And, Mr. President, thanks for joining us and——

President Biden. *[Inaudible]*

Prime Minister Kristersson. *[Laughter]* Thanks for joining us anyway. And thanks for all your help and all your support in our NATO accession. I do appreciate it very, very much.

We met with you, President, in—I met you in the White House last week. And we met, all of us, in the NATO summit yesterday. And now we meet in Helsinki. So, recently, I have met you more than I met my own family, actually. *[Laughter]* I like it a lot. *[Laughter]*

And I think there is a great potential for even closer U.S.-Nordic cooperation in all these fields of security, of green transition. I think basically a stronger transatlantic link in our time's big challenges—not least in relation to China, for example—that is an answer to many questions.

So I really hope these are a few of the topics we will be able to discuss here today. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:20 p.m. in the Hall of Mirrors at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, Prime Minister Kristersson referred to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine.

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